- Field visits for evolving grass-root level models for addressing various issues relating to population stabilization. On this basis, area specific field level initiatives will be undertaken with the involvement of PRIs, NGOs, Women Self-Help Groups and Youth Organisations.
- Two Ministerial Conferences were organized for convergence of social sector programmes.

As a result of the efforts of the NCP, it has been possible to bring population issues upfront in the District Action Plans (DAPs) formulated/being formulated by the high fertility districts. The Commission has also given additional Central assistance to the most backward districts to implement their DAPs.

The achievements relating to some major demographic indicators for the period 1994 to 1999 are given below:

S. No.	Item	1994	1999
1.	Crude Birth Rate	28.7	26.1
2.	Crude Death Rate	9.3	8.7
3.	Natural Growth Rate	19.4	17.4
4.	Total Fertility Rate	3.5	3.1
5.	Infant Mortality Rate	74.0	70.0

Percentage of Population Living below Poverty Line

4627. SHRI LAJPAT RAI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of population of the country living below the poverty line at the beginning as well as at the end of the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(b) the steps being taken to improve the situation; and

(c) the other details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) The Planning Commission estimates poverty at national and state level from the large sample surveys on household consumer expenditure conducted by the

National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) at an interval of approximately five year. The latest two such surveys were conducted in 1993-94 (NSS 50th round) and 1999-2000 (NSS 55th round). The percentage of persons living below the poverty line is' estimated as 35.97 per cent in 1993-94 and 26.10 per cent in 1999-2000. During the Ninth Plan period, poverty has been estimated only for the year 1999-2000.

(b) and (c) There is a three-pronged action to allevate and reduce the poverty in the country. These are: (i) acceleration of economic growth, (ii) human, and social development through literacy, education, health, nutrition, meeting of the minimum needs, elevation of social and economic status of the weaker sections of the society, etc., and (iii) direct attack on poverty through employment and income generating programmes and assets-building for the poor.

Annual Plan Allocation for Punjab

4628. SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the annual Plan outlay allocated for Punjab during the current year;

(b) whether the State Government has made any demand to increase the allocation; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Annual Plan outlay of Punjab for the year 2002-03 has not yet been finalized.

(b) and (c) Questions do not arise.

Loan-Grant Ratio in the Central Plan Assistance

4629. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU): Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether various State Governments, particularly Rajasthan, have proposed any changes in the loan-grant ratio in the Central Plan Assistance;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and